

Statement of Government Policy

21 January 2019



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Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of the Swedish Riksdag,

All around Europe, extreme right-wing movements are spreading. In several countries, forces with an antidemocratic agenda have made it all the way to government. But in Sweden we stand up for the equal value of all people. We are choosing a different path.

We are now beginning a historic form of cooperation. Sweden will now have a Government made up of the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party that will cooperate on the budget and the direction of policy in several areas with the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Now we can finally make a fresh start. The problems in society cannot wait.

Jobs must increase and climate emissions must be reduced.

Welfare must improve and integration must become more efficient and effective.

Security must increase and crime must be combated.

Sweden is in need of major reforms. We can now address these, together, across the old political blocs.

Mr Speaker,

This morning, hundreds of thousands of Swedes got out of bed, had a cup of coffee, made breakfast, reminded their children not to forget their gym bag.

There may have been a minor battle in the hallway about coats and gloves before everyone got out the door. Children off to preschool and school. Adults off to work. And most people are too busy to listen to

today's Statement of Government Policy. It's the hard work of ordinary people that is building Sweden.

The Swedish economy is strong. The budget deficit has been turned into a surplus, employment levels are at their highest in more than 25 years, and the national debt is at its lowest since the 1970s.

We now have room for manoeuvre. We now have major opportunities. When things are going well for Sweden, this should benefit everyone.

In the last electoral period, historic investments were made in welfare. Over the next four years, these resources will be strengthened by an additional SEK 5 billion per year for welfare.

Pensions will increase for those who have worked their whole working life on low wages. They have fought hard for Sweden's welfare. Now they should get the respect they deserve.

Employers' social security contributions will be reduced. It will be cheaper for business owners to hire their first employee.

The first steps will be taken towards a family week. This country's parents should have more time with their children.

Future generations must have access to clean air, healthy oceans and thriving natural environments. The climate transition will permeate policy.

Our society must be strong – and our development sustainable.

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Everyone who can work should work. Our economy must be kept in good order. The agreement on the fiscal policy framework remains in place. There must be full preparedness for a downturn in the economy.

A major new tax reform will be implemented. This is how we will promote jobs and competitiveness, reduce disparities and increase equality. This is how we will secure welfare and contribute to achieving the climate and environmental targets.

The last vestiges of the tax on pensions will be abolished. The austerity tax and extra taxation on generation changes will be removed. Tax deductions for household work will be expanded. Swedish industry and Swedish businesses, both small and large, must have good conditions to grow and employ more people. The problem of skilled people being expelled from Sweden must be resolved.

Sweden is a leading research nation. We will defend this position. Independent research must be guaranteed, and at the same time research policy must respond to global and national challenges in society.

The work of the National Innovation Council will continue. An export initiative for more jobs throughout the country will be implemented. Green obligations will be trialled. Collaboration, innovation and the climate transition make Swedish companies world leaders.

Together we are equipping ourselves for the future.
Together we are building a strong Sweden.

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The Government's objective is not only for the whole country to live. The whole country must thrive.

The national plan to invest SEK 700 billion in roads and railways will be completed.

New main lines for high-speed trains will be laid and the railways in northern Sweden will be expanded. More long-haul freight transport will shift from lorries to trains and ships.

A national ticketing system will be introduced for all public transport throughout Sweden. The travel deduction will be based on distance and will be neutral in terms of mode of transport. Foreign travel by train will be made easier – more people should be able to take the train down to the continent.

Trains must be more punctual. Investments in railway maintenance will increase. Commuting by bike will be made easier. Road maintenance will improve.

Broadband and mobile services will be expanded throughout the country and more service points will be opened.

It must be possible to live and work all over the country. Sweden must hold together.

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Rarely do people feel as free as when they put the key in the door to their first apartment.

Housing construction must be faster, cheaper and more sustainable. Mobility on the housing market must increase. The renting model will be reformed by allowing rents to be set freely for new builds. The quality and location of an apartment will have a greater influence on how the rent is set.

Investment support for the construction of rented housing will be concentrated, streamlined and targeted at rented housing throughout the country. Interest on the amount deferred when moving house will be abolished. Penalties for selling black market contracts will be tougher, and the purchase of such contracts will be criminalised.

The housing shortage will disappear, reform by reform.

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The Swedish forest industry must be sustainable and it must grow. Private forest ownership rights must be guaranteed. Landowners must receive fair financial compensation for restrictions to their right of ownership and right of use.

It should be a great deal easier to build close to shorelines in unexploited rural areas. At the same time, shore protection and the right of common access will be guaranteed in exploited areas.

An effective farming package will be put together to strengthen Swedish food production. Agriculture's dependence on fossil fuels must be reduced.

Consumer demand for organic food must be met and food waste must be tackled.

Mr Speaker,

Sweden will be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. There is no time for hesitation.

The transition required is considerable. A lot of work remains to be done. But we are at the forefront. With electric lorries and public transport. With increased construction using timber. With coal-free steel production and new textiles from recycled clothing.

The climate policy framework remains in place. All relevant legislation will be reviewed. The climate objectives must be achieved.

The energy agreement will be implemented. It should be easy and worthwhile to invest in your own production of renewable energy.

Sweden will push for a climate law at EU level. The reform efforts to implement the Paris Agreement will be intensified. The 1.5-degree target must be met.

A robust green tax shift will be implemented. Taxes will be raised on activities that are damaging to the environment and reduced for work and entrepreneurship.

The major climate impact of aviation must be reduced. Climate requirements for aviation will be tightened. It should be possible to charge and fuel fossil-free vehicles throughout the country. Climate bonuses and climate fees for cars will be strengthened and simplified. No new petrol- or diesel-driven cars will be sold after 2030. This is how we will reduce the major climate emissions from the transport sector.

Prospecting and new exploitation of coal, oil and fossil gas will be prohibited. A major drive will be initiated to sequester some previous emissions.

The climate investment programmes and the urban environment agreements promote local investments for global sustainability and they will be developed and made more efficient.

Children should be able to walk and cycle to school safely, and outdoor activities should be promoted.

Sweden must further develop a resource-efficient, circular and bio-based economy. Swedish consumers should be able to make sustainable and toxin-free choices.

More steps will be taken to make it easier to recycle and re-use. A minimum service level for household waste will be introduced. Deposit requirements will be introduced for more products and the spread of microplastics will be combated.

Biological diversity must be protected. Ecosystem services must be safeguarded. The appropriations for the protection of valuable natural environments will be increased.

Marine environments must be improved. Eutrophication, use of environmental toxins and emissions of pharmaceutical waste must be minimised. Fisheries must be sustainable. Controls will be tightened to stop illegal fishing, and bottom-trawling will be prohibited in protected areas.

Groundwater levels will be secured and access to drinking water protected.

Twenty years ago, the Riksdag took a crucial decision: we will pass on to the next generation a society in which the major environmental problems have been solved. The environmental objectives system must now be developed and new interim targets set.

The magic of Sweden's old forests. The trilling of the lark. The buzzing of honey bees. It is our duty to preserve Sweden's natural environment for our children and grandchildren.

Mr Speaker,

Language and work are the way into society.

During the electoral period, comprehensive reforms for better integration will be implemented. The entry agreements negotiated by the social partners for newly arrived immigrants and long-term unemployed people will be launched. It should be possible for the model to be used by temporary work agencies and also companies without collective agreements. An entry deduction will be introduced whereby the employers' social security contribution for young people without an upper secondary education and newly arrived immigrants is removed for the first two years.

An integration year – the Swedish New Start – will be introduced with intensive vocationally oriented Swedish language instruction, work

experience, vocational education and training, obligatory civic orientation and a one-year mentorship programme.

Women and men must have equal opportunities to support themselves and control their own lives. There will be a special focus on women's establishment in the labour market.

The provisions in the Reception of Asylum Seekers and Others Act on making one's own living arrangements will be limited to reduce segregation.

Passing an examination in Swedish and basic civic studies will be a requirement for receiving citizenship. We are raising ambitions and efforts to ensure that everyone learns Swedish, through a language obligation, enhanced Swedish for Immigrants, language preschool and language training for people on parental leave. More career posts for teachers will be introduced in areas of social exclusion.

Setting high standards for people and giving them a lot of opportunities helps them to grow.

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We live in a modern knowledge society. Everyone must be able to build on their knowledge and reshape their skills.

The Swedish labour market must be characterised by security and flexibility. Employment law must be adapted to the labour market of today, while a fundamental balance between the social partners is maintained. Companies will be given greater opportunities to adapt, and individual workers will be protected against arbitrary termination of employment.

If the social partners do not reach an agreement, a legislative amendment will be implemented to clearly expand the exemptions from the rules on order of selection. At the same time, an enhanced right to

skills development will be introduced, and a better balance will be created in employment protection for staff with different terms of employment.

Arbetsförmedlingen, Sweden's public employment service, will be fundamentally reformed. Independent actors will help to match people with employers and equip job seekers. Unemployment insurance will be developed so that more people qualify for compensation, and the incentives to apply for new jobs and retrain will increase.

At the same time, the study support system will be made more generous for older people wanting to further educate themselves or retrain. State support for short-time work will be developed. Professional development time will be introduced to enable skills development and entrepreneurship.

The Adult Education Initiative will be expanded and access to higher education and distance learning will increase throughout the country.

This way, everyone can be equipped for a rapidly changing labour market.

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Thanks to major efforts from headteachers, teachers and pupils, school performance in Sweden is improving.

In Södertälje, a quality drive across political blocs has helped improve school performance for the eighth year in a row. At Hovsjöskolan, the number of pupils achieving the grades they need to qualify for upper secondary school has doubled.

Nonetheless, a major reform effort is still needed to reinstate our country as a leading knowledge nation.

All pupils must be given a fair chance, regardless of their background or where they live. The focus on knowledge will be strengthened and quality requirements increased in all schools. The School Commission's proposals for increased equality in schools will be implemented. State support will be increased.

Material will be produced for a decision that will create the conditions for schools to be answerable to central government. There will be a moratorium on the establishment of independent compulsory and upper secondary schools with a confessional focus.

Teacher education will be reformed, standards will be raised and the admission requirements will be increased. It will be easier for academics to choose the teaching profession. Resources will be added to employ more teaching assistants.

Teachers must receive the support they need so that grading is fair and equitable throughout the country. Schools that want to should be able to introduce grading from year four. Subject grades will be introduced in upper secondary school. Grade inflation must be combated.

A national plan for peaceful study environments and security in schools will be produced. Mobile phone bans will be introduced. Vigorous action will be taken to tackle bullying. It should be easier to exclude or move pupils who have threatened others or subjected them to violence.

No pupil should be left behind, and those who want to should be able to get ahead. The reading-writing-arithmetic guarantee will become a reality. A proposal will be drawn up to make a ten-year compulsory school possible. Preschool and after-school care groups will be made smaller. It should be easier to get special support in smaller teaching groups. Support for children with neuropsychiatric disabilities will increase. Resource schools will be developed and schools for pupils with learning disabilities will be strengthened.

A homework guarantee and a priority timetable will be introduced so that pupils at risk of not achieving the necessary grades to qualify for upper secondary school can receive more teaching in the subjects they need. An increased pace of study will be offered to pupils who can achieve the knowledge objectives more quickly. Pupils in the upper years of compulsory school should be able to study upper secondary courses, and upper secondary pupils should be able to study higher education courses.

Let there be no doubt about where we are heading. The Swedish school system must be the greatest pride of our society.

Mr Speaker,

When a new life is on the way. When something hurts, or doesn't feel right. When the pain is constant. It is then, at our most fragile moments in life, that Sweden's health care system should be there offering security.

No one should have to wait too long for treatment or an operation. A general plan for shorter queues will be drafted, along with an updated 'waiting list billion'. There will be a particular focus on ill health among women. There will be new investments in ambulance care, cancer care and maternity care. A broad primary care reform will be implemented. It must be more attractive for doctors to work in primary care, and easier to provide health care in rural areas.

A person who is sick should be informed about their care plan and who they should call. The patient contract system will be developed. The right to continuity of care in general practice will be safeguarded. It should be possible to impose fines or sanctions on care providers that do not meet the care guarantee.

Sickness insurance should provide financial security in the event of illness. It should be easy to return to work upon recovery. Rehabilitation and occupational health services are crucial.

The conditions and working environment of those employed in health and social care must be improved, so that more young people choose to apply to the sector and remain in it – in the knowledge that their job is not only important, but also stimulating. The professional role of assistant nurses will be strengthened by means of a register or protected professional title. More people should be able to study on full pay to become specialist nurses.

Psychiatric care will be expanded. Mental health must be tackled. A new form of care for patients with minor mental health issues will be investigated. A zero-queue target will be introduced for child and adolescent psychiatric services.

Children living in sheltered accommodation need better support.

Elderly care should maintain a high standard. Continuity of care in home-help services will be introduced throughout the country. Home-help staff should receive work uniforms free of charge.

The prospects of a job, a good life and meaningful leisure time will be improved for everyone with any form of disability. The right to assistance for self-care, breathing and tube-feeding should be reintroduced. The definition of normal parental responsibility will be narrowed. The right to assistance due to a need for supervision will be strengthened. The question of who should have overall responsibility for personal assistance will be investigated.

Anyone who is entitled to personal assistance must receive it.

Mr Speaker,

A century ago, the Riksdag took the first of two decisions that gave women and men equal suffrage. The best way to honour those who showed the way in the fight for democracy is to continue their work in a new era.

Democracy in Sweden is strong, but we can never take it for granted. It must constantly be defended – generation after generation, electoral period after electoral period.

Democratic institutions must be protected. The independence of courts and public service media must be strengthened. The electoral system's resilience to manipulation will be improved. The media support system will create better conditions for independent journalism throughout the country.

We will preserve the reform ensuring free entry to state-owned museums. Culture schools will be developed, and all children should have the opportunity to benefit from them.

Astrid Lindgren once said that "*children create miracles when they read*". She was right. For this reason, access to school libraries with trained librarians will increase. The Reading Delegation's proposals will be implemented. We want more miracles in Sweden!

The sports movement and civic organisations should be supported and encouraged. Financial security for artists and cultural creators should be improved.

We are a feminist government. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency will remain. The rights of LGBTQ people will be strengthened. The Discrimination Act will be made more stringent.

The self-determination and influence of the indigenous Sami people will be strengthened. An independent human rights institution will be established.

Work on the national plan to combat racism will continue. Xenophobic hate crimes against minorities will be vigorously combated.

Wherever anti-Semitism exists, and however it is expressed, it must be identified and fought. In 2020, Sweden will host a new international conference on remembrance of the Holocaust, and Swedish young people should be given the opportunity to visit memorials in Europe. A new museum will be established to preserve and pass on the memory of the Holocaust.

Never forget – this was the promise we made to each other. Sweden will never forget.

Mr Speaker,

Criminality must be fought with everything society has. Record numbers of women and men are now applying for police training programmes. They should be supported by substantial resources, coordinated agencies and more effective legislation.

Ten thousand more people should be employed in the Swedish Police Authority by 2024. Policing must be an attractive profession. There must be increased protection for police officers and other emergency services staff. The penalties for offences linked to disputes among criminals should be tougher. New legislation on data storage will be presented to the Riksdag shortly. Police will be given the right to take decisions on camera surveillance in public places.

The minimum penalty for obstructing the course of justice will be increased substantially. A crown witness system will be investigated.

Unregistered pay-as-you-go mobile SIM cards will be banned. The penalties for those who transfer narcotics to others will be tightened.

Serious offences committed by young people under the age of 15 must always be investigated by the police. Actions to combat tax evasion and tax avoidance will be stepped up. Measures will be taken against the use of false identification documents, and against organised crime targeting our welfare systems.

People who are arrested and convicted must be handed effective sentences that can lead to life changes. The penalties should be tougher for those who recruit young people to criminal activities. Prisoners who do not cooperate in care and treatment should have their time in prison extended.

Crime prevention begins with the fight against poverty and segregation. A national exit programme will be introduced to allow more people to leave criminality behind them, and more community liaison workers and community police officers will be employed to ensure that fewer people are enticed into crime.

We are tough on both crime and its causes.
Society is always stronger than the gangs.

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The new Consent Act enables more rape prosecutions. The work to realise a culture of consent will now continue.

More resources will be allocated to prevention efforts, and sex and relationship teaching in schools will be modernised. The minimum penalty for rape will be increased. A new offence classification of gross sexual molestation will be introduced. Statutory limitation periods will be extended, and removed entirely for sexual offences against children. More reception centres for victims of sexual offences will be established.

The Government will increase its initiatives against domestic violence. This applies to immediate support to victims and their children, preventive efforts, and initiatives to make those who perpetrate such violence change their behaviour.

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Standing up for your life and your love, even when you know that your family refuses to accept it, takes great courage. And telling the world about it to bring about change for others takes even greater courage.

Fadime Sahindal had that courage. And because of this she was murdered, exactly 17 years ago today. This is how she concluded her speech to the Riksdag a few months before her murder:

“It should be a given that you can have both your family and the life you want for yourself. Unfortunately, it is not a given for many girls. I hope that you won’t turn your backs on them. That you won’t close your eyes to them.”

I wish I could say that honour culture has been suppressed. But this is not the case. It persists, and it still threatens people’s freedom and safety. Previous action has not been sufficient. We must do more. We will do more.

We must impose tougher penalties, increase awareness and strengthen efforts in schools and social services.

It should be easier to expel non-Swedish citizens who commit honour-related offences and hate crimes. At the same time, there should be greater protection against expulsion for victims of honour-related crime.

It should be possible to offer young people a greater degree of intervention without their parents’ consent where there is a suspicion of honour-related crime. Society must act immediately on any suspicion

that someone is going to be subjected to female genital mutilation or be married off against their will.

Mr Speaker,

The fight against terrorism and violent extremism must be uncompromising. The legislation will be made tougher. Participation in a terrorist organisation will be criminalised. The Swedish Security Service will be given the possibility to read encrypted traffic. The internal border controls will remain in place as long as is necessary.

Terrorism and extremism are unfortunately just parts of the complex security threat targeting all open and democratic societies.

The work to create a modern total defence continues. The national security strategy must be implemented based on a broad security analysis. A national centre will be set up to increase information and cyber security. A new government agency will be established to strengthen our psychological defences against influence operations and similar. Our civil preparedness will be equipped to better handle climate-related crises such as health threats, fires, drought and flooding. Our vigilance against foreign attempts to acquire sensitive infrastructure will increase.

Sweden will maintain its security policy line. The defence appropriations will be gradually increased to strengthen Sweden's military capabilities and our cooperation with other countries and organisations will be deepened.

Our military non-alignment serves our country well. Sweden will not apply for membership of NATO. However, we will safeguard the transatlantic link, develop our defence cooperation, particularly with Finland, and deepen cooperation for increased security around the Baltic Sea.

If another Nordic or EU country suffers a disaster or an attack, Sweden will not remain passive. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is similarly affected.

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Membership of the European Union is a foundation stone of Sweden's national, European and global action.

Sweden will work for an effective EU – an EU for the citizens, that creates jobs and increases the security of its people. An EU that tackles the threat of climate change and improves its competitiveness in the global economy.

Together with the rest of the EU, Sweden will continue to work to ensure that the planned withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU is accomplished in an orderly way. We are prepared to handle various scenarios.

Member States that break with the EU's values and the rule of law should face severe consequences. History teaches us what can happen if we close our eyes to abuses of democratic rights and freedoms.

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Our term on the UN Security Council has now come to an end – but Sweden's international work for peace and democracy continues.

A number of serious challenges need to be dealt with:

The conflicts in Syria and Yemen pose serious security threats with catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and intervention in Ukraine are flagrant breaches of international law. The Rohingya in Myanmar are being subjected to crimes against humanity. The violence must cease, and those responsible must be brought to justice. The Korean Peninsula must be

rid of nuclear weapons. A lasting peace between Israel and Palestine requires a two-state solution.

Sweden is working actively to promote necessary reforms of the UN. International law must be safeguarded. The role of women in peace processes must be strengthened. Peace and democracy must be promoted through efforts for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, for easing of tensions and disarmament, for mediation and dialogue. Trust between people and countries is a powerful tool against war and conflicts.

That is how common security is created.

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The right of asylum must be safeguarded in Sweden, in Europe and internationally. More countries must take greater responsibility. Sweden's reception of refugees must be sustainable in the long term. The Act Temporarily Restricting the Possibility to Obtain Residence Permits in Sweden will be extended for two years, while at the same time persons eligible for subsidiary protection will be given the same right to family reunification as refugees.

The Government will work to establish a common asylum system in the EU that distributes the reception of refugees fairly and proportionately. Asylum seekers should be offered a legally certain reception with short waiting times. Those with grounds for protection must rapidly become a part of society, and those without such grounds must return promptly.

The most important tool to stop refugee disasters is action for development and conflict resolution.

The feminist foreign policy will be developed. The rights of women and minorities around the world must be strengthened. Gender equality

and sexual and reproductive health and rights are essential parts of global development policy.

In a time of trade wars, Sweden must defend free trade and stand up for fair conditions. Investments in Sweden and international trade agreements must safeguard the environment, human health and workers' rights.

The Swedish Global Deal initiative brings together almost 100 governments, enterprises and organisations. The OECD is now taking over as host organisation. Sweden will continue to promote social dialogue for better working conditions and increased productivity.

The Government will continue Sweden's extensive development cooperation and maintain development assistance equivalent to one per cent of GNI. Development assistance should focus even more on promoting democracy. We remain committed to high ambitions for climate financing. Our leadership for globally sustainable oceans will continue.

As other countries reduce efforts for global sustainability, Sweden will increase them. We must be at the vanguard for the 2030 Agenda.

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Mr Speaker,

The electoral period began in the autumn. Winter has now arrived, but today, 21 January, a new Government will begin its work. We have less time than usual, but together, and in broad cooperation, we can and will achieve all the more.

This is a new era, a challenging and crucial era. The parliamentary cooperation that begins today is historic.

Government of Sweden

SE103 33 Stockholm

www.government.se